Amendments To the Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown.

1-6. (canceled)

7. (currently amended) A method for execution on a system to provide compatibility between new and old versions of a data schema that are used for defining structures of object and/or data models for storage in a database, wherein such schemas describe data structures, each schema having a namespace, type names, and element names, the method comprising:

characterizing both an old version and a new version of a data schema, wherein the new version is derived from the old version, by assigning and preserving an identification of the version ~~of each schema~~ to a first attribute of the old and new versions of the schema,

maintaining the namespace, type names, and element names of each version of the schema independent of the version,

allowing expansion of the types and elements while maintaining the respective type names or element names, and

accepting without change unexpanded types and elements present in the old version of the schema into the new version of the schema so that by maintaining the namespace, type names, and element names the new and the old schema versions are both upward compatible and downward compatible.

8. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 7, wherein a calendar date indicative of the new or old version can be assigned via a second attribute for each version of the schema.

9. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 7, wherein the old and new versions of the same schemas are described by an extensible markup language.

10. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 8, wherein the schemas corresponding to the old and new versions are described by an extensible markup language.

11. (currently amended) A programmable system comprising:

stored attributes, types or element names of a data structure for providing for downward compatibility between new and old versions of a data structures of object models and/or data models each organized according to a different version of a data schema determinative of how data is stored, wherein

the new version is derived from the old version and a first attribute in each version of the schema is provided for identification of the version of the schema, wherein

a namespace used in each version of the schema and type names and element names used in each version of the schema are preserved regardless of the version, the system further comprising:

one or more mechanisms for expansion of the types and elements used in the old version, while preserving the respective type names or element names used in the old version, and for accepting without change into the new version unexpanded types or elements used in the old version, the foregoing combination enabling the old version of the schema to interpret data structures of the new version of the schema, and thereby providing downward compatibility between the new and old versions.

12. (previously presented) The system in accordance with Claim 11, wherein a calendar date is assigned via a second attribute to each version of the schema.

13. (previously presented) The system in accordance with Claim 11, wherein the new and old versions of the schema are described by an extensible markup language.

14. (previously presented) The system in accordance with Claim 12, wherein the new and old versions of the schema are described by an extensible markup language.